



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington D C 20520

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March 2, 1977

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Ms. Yvonne Thayer  
Political Counselor  
American Embassy  
Buenos Aires

~~5-1-1-1~~  
H

Dear Yvonne:

I assume the Ambassador informed you that your letter of February 11 arrived while he was in my office. Your conspiracy was timed beautifully and, as I am sure you know, the Ambassador showed the coffin to Messrs. Habib, Todman and Bray as well as to Ms. Derian, who took us all aback with her comment that she received one in the sixties.

The question of anti-business terrorism and our apparent indifference to it is a troublesome one. I raised it with the Board of the Argentine-American Chamber of Commerce on February 24 and informed them that we were besieged by a variety of liberal and leftist voices. These voices are quick to point to government abuses, which I spelled out to the Chamber, but they ignore or misrepresent leftist terrorism. I urged the Chamber to engage in people-to-people contact so that Americans will realize that both sides are committing atrocities. Under no circumstances do I want to be a tonto util of the extreme left.

On human rights cases, we were delighted to learn of Juan Mendez' departure. Good news!

Re Dora Goldfarb, we continue to hope for her release. Clarisse Feldman told me that Dora's children had been allowed to visit her. Please be sure to report any developments by priority cable.

We are trying to modulate our requests for information on Argentine prisoners, giving priority to cases where there are American relatives or a strong U. S. interest.

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This may not discourage Congressional requests, however, and we have no choice but to forward such requests for your action. If the GOA fails to respond, so be it. In the case of telephone queries from the Hill, I have been pointing out that our reduction in FMS credits will not serve to make the Argentines more responsive on human rights cases. The logical retort would be that the credits did little to contribute to their responsiveness in the first place.

In your letter of February 4 you mentioned that you would look for my books. You may have no luck since they are apparently out of print. But if you do find them, please mark the envelope clearly: "printed matter." I can do without any more of your surprise packages.

My best.

Sincerely,

Fernando E. Rondon

cc: Ambassador Hill

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ACTION MEMORANDUM

S/S

*Cont. Still*

*→ Per: Dr. E. M. +  
yr file*

*[Signature]*

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TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: P - Mr. Habib

FROM: ARA - William H. Luers, Acting

*March 1, 1977*

Argentine Ambassador Asks to See You

Issue for Decision

Whether you should grant the Argentine Ambassador's request to call on you, presumably to discuss bilateral problems stemming from human rights.

Background/Analysis

On February 24 you informed the Congress that the Administration's request for FMS credits for Argentina for FY-1977 would be reduced to \$15 million in light of the human rights situation in Argentina.

This appears to have triggered Argentine Ambassador Aja Espil's request to call on you.

Your announcement has generated the following additional reaction:

-- In a February 28 communique, the Foreign Ministry reportedly described our action as interference in Argentina's internal affairs and a lack of understanding of Argentine realities. The Foreign Ministry stated that no state, whatever its power or ideology, can assume the role of an international tribunal, interfering in the domestic life of another country.

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-- According to press reports, the Argentine military services are recommending that the GOA refuse our military credits.

-- The Argentine Foreign Minister told our Ambassador on February 28 that further Argentine action might be forthcoming in 48 hours, including the decision on whether to use FMS credits.

We recommend an appointment for two principal reasons:

-- To underline the seriousness with which we view human rights problems;

-- To maintain channels of communication to the GOA which will be needed if we are to try to influence their nuclear program (which is ahead of Brazil's) and protect economic and other interests.

Recommendation:

That you agree to receive the Argentine Ambassador.

Approve \_\_\_\_\_ Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Drafted:ARA/ECA:FERondon:jc  
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February 28, 1977

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TO: ARA/PPC - John Ritchie  
FROM: ARA/ECA - Fred Rondon *FR*  
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: The Secretary's Reception  
REF: Mr. Luers' Memorandum of February 17.  
Our contribution is attached as requested.

Attachment

ARA/ECA:FERondon:jc

Concurrence: ARA/ECA - Mr. Zimmermann */FR*

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ARGENTINA

Ambassador Jorge Antonio Aja Espil

Pronounced (AHha EhsPEEL)

Ambassador Aja Espil is 57 years of age and a prominent lawyer with considerable experience in international organizations. He served as Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs from 1962-63, and as Ambassador to Colombia from 1971-73. His background is conservative, rural and without involvement in partisan politics.

Bilateral Issues

-- Nuclear Proliferation. The Argentines, who are ahead of Brazil in nuclear know-how, are wondering when we will begin to pressure them to forego their plans for nuclear independence. Up to now, our efforts with Brazil have stimulated Argentine support for the GOB and previously unheard of speculation about Argentine-Brazilian nuclear cooperation.

-- Human Rights. The human rights situation remains grim. Despite our representations at every level of the GOA, there has been little change. We attach highest priority to GOA acknowledgment of its political prisoners and the punishment of those guilty of excesses.

-- Military Assistance. We have deferred signature of the FY-1977 agreement (\$36 million) and reduced the 1978 figure to \$15 million. The GOA is fully aware that our actions are directly related to human rights.

-- International Credit. Argentina believes that we will vote against their loans in the Inter-American Development Bank if required to do so by the Harkin Amendment. The GOA is fearful that our negative stance might extend to the World Bank, Eximbank and possibly even lead to difficulties in obtaining private bank credits.

-- Shipping/Airline Problems. Our airlines and shipping lines are encountering passenger quota and cargo restriction problems. Countervailing USG action will shortly take place unless the GOA changes its practices at once. We are actively seeking such change.

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Feb. 28, 1977

Mr. Ambassador,

I thought that you and Max would  
find this interesting. Please  
restrict its distribution to  
State personnel.

*Fuel*

*For Dec. only*

*Res. to Amb's  
files*

**February 16, 1977**

~~RR  
RG  
GD  
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TO: PRA - Mr. Charles W. Bray

THROUGH: ARA/RPP - Mr. John F. King

FROM: ARA/RPP - Charles E. Finan

SUBJECT: Some Comments on the MILGP Commanders' Conference  
in Panama January 31 - February 4

Human Rights. Mr. Barnebey and General Cavazos made strong and articulate statements urging the Commanders to use their influence with Latin American military counterparts on behalf of human rights improvements. Mr. Barnebey emphasized the deep commitment of the new Administration to improvement of human rights internationally. General Cavazos, drawing from his own combat experience, noted that he had taken many prisoners under dangerous conditions and had never killed, tortured or maimed one; he pointed out that violation of human rights is a stain on the honor of a professional soldier, whether Latin American or otherwise. Except for a minority of the more sensitive, sophisticated participants, however, the audience seemed neither moved nor persuaded.

MAAG's and MILGP's in Latin America. Despite my efforts, the DOD participants insisted that NSDM 342 would stand, and that almost all the Latin MILGP's will continue in business as usual after September 30. Interestingly, however, some of the more thoughtful Commanders told me they do not believe it, and that the ODC's - either of three or six men - are probably the wave of the future (I believe even General McAuliffe privately believes this and can live with it). The February 3 discussion of lessons learned, led by Commanders of the three ODC's, was extremely useful since it indicated that the ODC's are feasible replacements for MILGP's in selected countries,

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permitting continued DOD representation with host country militaries.

Support from Washington. The Commanders are less bitter and negative about cuts in MILGP personnel and security assistance than in what they see as lack of support from DOD, USCINCSO and State (primarily PM). They point out that months pass without answers to questions about cancelling assignments of excess personnel, paying for non-host-country-subsidized quarters, and informing host governments about new reductions in security assistance. Lt. General McAuliffe apologized on behalf of his Command, but noted that he still has few answers himself.

#### South Atlantic Treaty Organization and other Controversies.

The briefing by the J-5, Vice Admiral Hannifin, made it clear that one reason we keep hearing of the proposed South Atlantic Treaty Organization, participation by Brazil with the US in joint defense of the Hemisphere and anti-Cuba action in the Caribbean is that the Joint Chiefs continue to crank up studies and contingency plans on such subjects. It is significant that the MILGP's are JCS bodies; they report to the JCS via USCINCSO, and only laterally to us and to OASD/ISA.

Canal Zone (CZ) Schools. Impressive briefings by representatives of the Service schools in the Canal Zone, -- USARSA, IAAFA and USNAVSTA -- helped bolster my continuing conviction that the schools should be saved if possible. However, I believe multinationalization is a USARSA is probably the only feasible way to handle funding shortages. One problem the MILGP Commanders highlighted is the gap between what it costs to train a student at one of the Spanish language CZ schools -- especially USARSA -- and the usually much smaller cost of training in the US.

Conclusion. State Department attendance at such a conference is extremely useful in providing high level, authoritative policy guidance, countering some fallacious impressions (e.g., the State Department is opposed to training and backs cuts in IMET funds, alleged Congressional concern with human rights is a State Department chimera raised to harass the military, State disregards support for and defense of MILGP's by its own Ambassadors, etc.) and in providing a spokesman to reiterate State's role in the security assistance process as reflected in the law.

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